

Mission San Jose Y San Miguel de Aguayo  
San Antonio, Texas.

HABS No. Tex-333

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ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Texas-3

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Bartlett Cocke, District Officer  
615 Maverick Bldg., San Antonio, Texas.

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

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MISSION SAN JOSE Y SAN MIGUEL DE AGUAYO  
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Owner: Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of San Antonio, Archbishop Droesserts.

Date of Erection: The first church was founded on Feb. 23, 1720 about a half league from the present church. They celebrated the completion of the church on March 5, 1731 by founding San Juan, Espada and Concepcion on their present sites. The cornerstone of the second (present) church was laid May 19, 1768 by Don Hugo O'Connor, Governor and Capt. General of Texas. This church was completed in 1781.

Architect: Pedro Huisar

Builder: The Franciscan Priars and Indians under the direction of Pedro Huisar.

Present Condition: Only the walls of the granary and the walls of the chapel and convent were left in 1932. Since that time the roofs of all these buildings, Indian quarters and other restoration work have been done by various government agencies under the direction of Harvey P. Smith, A.I.A. San Antonio, Texas.

Number of Stories: The church, granary and convent are two stories, the Indian and soldiers quarters are one story.

Materials of Construction: The entire building, walls, roof, etc., is made of stone three to five feet thick. The floor is of flagstone and hard tamped earth. The interior finish on walls and ceiling is smooth white plaster.

Other Existing Records: "Texas in the Middle 18th Century" - Eugene Bolton - 1915  
"Indians and Missions" - Frederick C. Chabot - 1930  
"San Antonio de Bexar" - William Corner - 1890  
Daughter of Tehuan written in 1866 in German by Alto S. Hoermann, translated into English

in 1932 by Alois Braun, University of Texas Library, Austin, Texas.

Archives of the San Fernando Cathedral, San Antonio, Texas.

The following reports are in the archives of San Francisco el Grande-Mother House of the Franciscan Order, Mexico:

Fray Antonio Cipriano 1749

Governor Barrios 1758

Fray Jose de Solis 1768

Fray Juan Augustin Morfi 1778

Complete drawings of the Mission San Jose have been made by Harvey P. Smith, A.I.A., San Antonio, Texas.

#### Additional Data:

A complete description of the work, size and activity of the Mission San Jose may be secured from Fray Juan Morfi's report of 1778 to the Mother College:

"The Mission of San Jose Y San Miguel de Aguayo is slightly more than half a league from the preceeding one. From the time of its establishment by the venerable Fray Antonio Margil de Jesus in 1720 to the present, it has been under the care of the Apostolic Fathers of the College of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe of Zacatecas. It is, in truth, the first mission in America, not in point of time, but in point of beauty, plan and strength, so that there is not a presidio along the entire frontier line that can compare with it."

"The living quarters and public offices form a square 216 varas on each side, but two of these measure 220 varas on the outside, because the Indian houses built next to them are four varas in depth. There are four identical gates on the four corners, over the top of each of which, a bastion has been built to defend them, and on the side of the hollow, or indentation, of each gate, loopholes have been made through the walls of the adjoining rooms on either side, where the most trusted Indians live, that they may fire safely upon the enemy should the doors be stormed. On the West side, in front of the church, there is a fifth door with an iron grating, and this is the only one that is open every day. It faces a wide plain from which the trees and brush were cut down for a good distance to prevent a surprise by the enemy."

"From this gate to the north corner, a granary was built of stone and mortar with three naves and a vaulted roof. There is also a loom in which rich blankets, cotton cloth, sack cloth and other heavy cotton cloth worn by the Indians were woven. There is a carpenter shop, a backsmith shop, a tailor shop, and everything needed in a well regulated community. Lastly everything is in such order and so well planned that even if the enemy were capable of laying seige, the besieged,

having, as they have, their granaries well filled with food and plenty of good water in their wells, could afford to laugh at their opponents."

"Next to the North side a new church was being built within the walls, which perhaps is finished by now as there was very little to be done when I saw it at the close of 1777. It is a beautiful temple with three vaulted naves, fifty varas long and ten wide with its transept. The corner stone was laid by Hugo O'Conner on May 19, 1768. It has a beautiful cupola, though it is overcrowded with unnecessary ornaments. This building, because of its size, good taste, and beauty would grace a large city as a parish church. The whole structure is admirably proportioned and strongly built of stone and mortar, chiefly out of a sandy limestone, that is light and porous, when freshly quarried, but in a few days hardens, and becomes one with the mortar for which reason it is as useful for building as tezontle (volcanic-porous stone used extensively in Mexico.) This stone is secured from a quarry near the mission of Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion. The facade is very costly because of the statues and ornaments with which it was heavily decorated, detracting somewhat from its natural beauty. In the center, and immediately over the main entrance, a large balcony was constructed which gives much majesty to the building, and the effect would have been enhanced if the hexagonal window that illuminates the choir, and is the entrance, had been made to simulate a door. In a word, no one could have imagined that there were such good artists in so desolate a place."

"The sacristy of the new church, which is where the divine services are celebrated for the time being, has a door that opens into the living quarters of the religious. It is a handsome and cheerful room, large, with vaulted roof, good light, well decorated and every thing is in good taste."

"The convent, or living quarters for the missionaries, has two stories with spacious galleries. The one on the second floor opens out on the flat roof of the Indian quarters and is very convenient. Two quadrants (sun dials) on vertical columns were set up there, made out of a species of limestone so soft when first brought from the quarry, that it can be planed like wood, but which when exposed to the air, hardens and can be polished like marble. The figures of the facade of the church, the bannister of the stairway of the convent and an image of Saint Joseph that is on its pedestal, all were made more beautiful by the ease with which the stone worked. There are enough rooms for the missionaries, for the convenience of a few guests, as well as the necessary offices for the religious, a large well ordered kitchen, a comfortable refectory and a pantry."

There is an armory where the guns, bows and arrows and the lances are kept, with which to arm the neophytes in case of attack, or to act as auxiliary troops on a campaign in which case the mission provides them, not only with arms, but with ammunition and supplies as well. In a separate room, are kept the decorations and dresses with which the Indians bedeck themselves for their dances, introduced by the missionaries now Spanish and now Mexican, that they might forget their native mitotes (Pagan festivals)."

"The farm occupies about a league square and is all fenced, the fence being in good condition. For its benefit, water is taken from the San Antonio River and distributed by means of a beautiful irrigation ditch to all parts of the field where corn, beans, lentils, cotton, sugar cane, watermelons, melons and sweet potatoes are raised. It also has a patch for all kinds of vegetables and there are some fruit trees, from among which the peaches stand out, their fruit weighing at times as much as a pound."

"The mission was founded with Pampopas, Mesquites, and Pastias to which later were added Camanas, Tacames, Cannas, Aquastallas, and Xaunaes. These Indians are today well instructed and civilized and know how to work very well at their mechanical trades and are proficient in some of the arts. They speak Spanish perfectly with the exception of those who are daily brought in from the wood by the zeal of the missionaries. Many play the harp, the violin and the guitar well, sing well and dance the same dances as the Spaniards. They go about well dressed and are abundantly fed, and arouse the envy of the less fortunate settlers of San Fernando, the indolence of many of whom obliges them to beg their food from these Indians, who enjoy so much plenty, and whose mission is in opulence, thanks to the labors and exertions of Fray Pedro Ramirez de Arellano of the college of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe of Zacatecas, who is in charge of this mission and is the president of all the missions in the Province and whose dedication, zeal, and religious spirit deserve all praise."

"On March 1768, the mission had 350 persons, of which 110 were capable of bearing arms - 45 of these could use guns, and the rest bows and arrows. Since that time their number has been greatly reduced. There were 1054 baptisms performed up to that year, 287 marriages, and 359 burials."

Credit is given for the translation of the report to Dr. Carlos Castaneda, Garcia Library University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

Credit is given, for all dates and descriptive data to Harvey P. Smith, A.I.A. San Antonio, Texas.

Author: Jim Cummins

Jim Cummins

APPROVED: Daniel C. Cocke

Bartlett Cocke, Dist. Officer

Date: Aug. 25, 1936

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## MISSION SAN JOSE Y SAN MIGUEL DE AGUAYO

Additional Data

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The Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo is one of the finest examples of Spanish architecture in North America and most certainly the most refined relic of the Spaniards existing in the United States. Like so many of our southern monuments, it has been accorded little ballyhoo. In other sections it might conceivably have been the goal of tours and treks, the feature of its locality, and the inspiration for advertisements.

The Mission San Jose was established in 1720 along with four other Franciscan missions near San Antonio. The relative importance of San Jose to the other missions as well as to all other missions in America was demonstrated by the personal interest taken in them and their construction by His Catholic Majesty, King Philip V of Spain. This interest resulted in the dispatch of Pedro Huizar, favorite sculptor of the Spanish court, to execute the carvings on San Jose as well as the other missions. Huizar's work at San Jose is still in a marvelous state of preservation and offers the unusual opportunity for study in America of an example of the finest of European work of its period.

The main facade is executed in a manner typical of its period. Great bare wall surfaces completely deleted of interest offer not the slightest distraction from the passionate concentration of enrichment about a central motive. There are few buildings in Spain itself which have <sup>been</sup> carried out in so catholic an interpretation of this axiom of the best Spanish design. Nor can any carving of the period compare to the delicacy of line found in this brilliantly romantic motive.

In another wall of the building occurs the famous Rose Window which has many times been declared one of the outstanding examples of stone sculpture in the world. Thanks to the Historic American Buildings Survey we are able to present not only a photograph of this window but a measured drawing as well. It was carved by Pedro Huizar and still stands a monument to his surpassing mastery of design as well as his craftsmanship.

A local legend still extant amusingly seeks to explain the apparent misnomer of Rose Window. Sensing the hardships and uncertainties of life in the new world, Pedro Huizar refused to take his sweetheart, Rose Monterey, on so perilous a journey to frontier country. Perhaps he solaced her with promises that he would send for her later as so many of his countrymen have done since then. For five long years he is said to have worked feverishly to hasten the time of her coming. But when at last his work was nearly done and she was due to arrive, a message from a ship brought the tidings of her death. The window was named in her honor.

The plan layout of San Jose as shown here does not comprise the entire original establishment, which was in the form of a quadrangle, enclosed on the south, east and west sides by connected dwellings for the Indians, the sides being pierced here and there by gates. In the northwest corner was the Granary with its flying buttresses. A grist mill was located to the north of the Mission outside the walls. Excavations in 1934 revealed the existence of these old foundations, and restorations, using the old foundations and following descriptions found in old Spanish records, are about to be completed under the supervision of Harvey P. Smith, local architect. These restorations include the rebuilding of the Church proper, the Granary and the three sides of the quadrangle previously referred to.

A complete description of the work, size and activity of the Mission San Jose may be secured from Fray Juan Morfi's report of 1773 to the Mother College:

"The Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo is slightly more than a half league from the preceding one. From the time of its establishment by the venerable Fray Antonio Margil de Jesus in 1720 to the present, it has been under the care of the Apostolic Fathers of the College of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe of Zacatecas. It is, in truth, the first mission in America, not in point of time, but in point of beauty, plan and strength, so that there is not a presidio along the entire frontier line that can compare with it.

"The living quarters and public offices form a square 216 varas on each side, but two of these measure 220 varas on the outside, because the Indian houses built next to them are four varas in depth. There are four identical gates on the four corners, over the top of each of which a bastion has been built to defend them, and on the side of the hollow or indentation of each gate, loopholes have been made through the walls of the adjoining rooms on either side, where the most trusted Indians live, that they may fire safely upon the enemy should the doors be stormed. On the west side, in front of the church, there is a fifth door with an iron grating, and this is the only one that is open every day. It faces a wide plain from which the trees and brush were cut down for a good distance to prevent a surprise by the enemy.

"From this gate to the north corner, a granary was built of stone and mortar with three naves and a vaulted roof. There is also a loom in which rich blankets, cotton cloth, sack cloth and other heavy cotton cloth worn by the Indians were woven. There is a carpenter shop, a blacksmith shop, a tailor shop and everything needed in a well regulated community. Lastly, everything is in such order and so well planned that even if the enemy were capable of laying siege, the besieged, having, as they have, their granaries well filled with food and plenty of good water in their wells, could afford to laugh at their opponents.

"Next to the north side a new church was being built within the walls, which perhaps is finished by now as there was very little to be

done when I saw it at the close of 1777. It is a beautiful temple with three vaulted naves, fifty varas long and ten wide with its transept. The corner stone was laid by Hugo O'Connor on May 19, 1768. It has a beautiful cupola, though it is overcrowded with unnecessary ornaments. This building, because of its size, good taste, and beauty would grace a large city as a parish church. The whole estructura is admirably proportioned and strongly built of stone and mortar, chiefly out of a sandy limestone that is light and porous when freshly quarried, but in a few days hardens and become one with the mortar, for which it is as useful for building as tezontle (volcanic-porous stone used extensively in Mexico). This stone is secured from a quarry near the Mission of Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion. The facade is very costly because of the statues and ornaments with which it was heavily decorated, detracting somewhat from its natural beauty. In the center, and immediately over the main entrance, a large balcony was constructed which gives much majesty to the building, and the effect would have been enhanced if the hexagonal window that illuminates the choir, and is the entrance, had been made to simulate a door. In a word, no one could have imagined that there were such good artists in so desolate a place.

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"The farm occupies about a league square and is all fenced, the fence being in good condition. For its benefit, water is taken from the old San Antonio River and distributed by means of a beautiful irrigation ditch (acequia) to all parts of the field where corn, beans, lentils, cotton, sugar cane, watermelons, melons and sweet potatoes are



raised. It also has a patch for all kinds of vegetables and there are some fruit trees, from among which the peaches stand out, their fruit weighing at times as much as a pound.

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Credit is given for the translation of the report to Dr. Carloe Castaneda, Garcia Library, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

Credit is given for all dates and descriptive data to Harvey P. Smith, A. I. A., San Antonio, Texas.

-- \_\_\_\_\_, Southern Architectural Review, May 1937

Materiale of Construction:

The entire buildings, walls, roof, etc., are made of etone three to five feet thick. The floor is of flagstone and hard tamped earth. The interior finish on walls and ceiling is smooth white plaster.

Other Existing Records:

"Texas in the Middle 18th Century"--Eugene Bolton--1915. "Indians and Missions"--Frederick C. Chabot--1930. "San Antonio de Bexar"--William Corner--1890. "Daughter of Tehuan" written 1866 in German by Alto S. Hoermann, translated into English in 1932 by Aloie Braun, University of Texas Library, Austin, Texas. Archives of the San Fernando Cathedral, San Antonio, Texas. The following reports are in the archive of San Francisco el Grande-Mother House of the Franciscan Order, Mexico: Fray Antonio Cipriano, 1749; Governor Barrios 1758; Fray Jose de Solis 1768; Fray Juan Augustin Morfi 1778. Complete drawings of the Mission San Jose have been made by Harvey P. Smith, A. I. A., San Antonio, Texas. "The Rose Window of San Jose" by Jan Iebelle Fortune in Holland's Magazine, March 1932.

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

Addendum to:

Mission San Jose Y San Miguel De Aguayo  
6539 San Jose Road  
San Antonio  
Bexar County  
Texas

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Originally recorded as:

Mission San Jose Y San Miguel De Aguayo  
San Antonio, Texas

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. TX-333

ADDENDUM TO:  
MISSION SAN JOSE Y SAN MIGUEL DE AGUAYO

Location: 6539 San Jose Road, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Present Owner: The State of Texas and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Texas.

Present Use: Public museum.

Significance: Established on its present site, circa 1740, Mission San Jose is the most complete of the five extant mission complexes dating from the eighteenth century to be found in San Antonio. The surviving buildings are of significance to the study of Texas colonial history and provide the contemporary observer with a visual concept of this important frontier institution. The San Jose church is particularly significant as an architectural monument.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo was officially founded February 23, 1720. On that day four Spanish officials from the Presidio of San Antonio de Bexar, acting on a decree from the Marquis de Aguayo dated January 22, 1720, accompanied Father Antonio Margil, his companion missionaries and a group of Indians to a spot some four miles south of San Antonio on the east bank of the San Antonio River. At that spot, "an elevated plain, spacious and very level," Fr. Margil had previously caused to be erected a straw hut or jacal, erected in the Indian manner with walls consisting of stakes or branches driven into the ground and finished in wattle and daub fashion and covered by a thatched grass roof.

Symbolic possession-taking ceremonies were led by Captain Lorenzo Garcia of the Presidio of Bexar. Handfuls of grass were pulled, selected branches cut from trees, rocks, and handfuls of dirt were thrown across the fields as signs of ownership. Garcia explained to the Indians that the land was theirs but that the missionaries were to have complete charge of their affairs. An irrigation ditch was traced out, and a square of 100 varas was selected around which the mission buildings were to be erected. The buildings that did get erected in the square were characteristic Indian jacals serving as temporary shelters.

The Mission was apparently an initial success in proselyting the aboriginal Indians of the area. Prior to establishing the Mission of San Jose, Fr. Margil had assisted Fr. Olivares at the Mission of San Antonio de Padua. During that time he had encountered three tribes who expressed a desire to submit to mission life, but due to their hostility with those Indians already settled at San Antonio de Padua, they desired to locate elsewhere. It was at this point in 1719 that Fr. Margil was prompted to write the Marquis de Aguayo suggesting the founding of a new mission to be called San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo to be under the care of the College of Zacatecas, a Franciscan order.

Affairs progressed well at the Mission. Two soldiers from the Presidio de Bexar resided at the Mission acting not only to guard the missionaries, but also to oversee the instruction of the Indians in various trades. In 1721 when Aguayo paid his first visit to San Jose, the population already numbered 227 Indian inhabitants, and by 1724 the mission's large irrigation ditch was in operation and the Mission enjoyed its first surplus of corn.

For some unknown reason the first site of the Mission was abandoned between 1724 and 1727 and relocated on the west bank of the San Antonio River, slightly south of the original site. Father Miguel Nunez had been placed in charge of San Jose by then, and it may be that he was instrumental in relocating the Mission. Shortly after the removal to the new site Fr. Nunez erected new adobe buildings, dug a new irrigation canal and planted new fields.

It appears that by the year 1731 Fr. Nunez had erected an adobe church building at San Jose. It has been written that the church of the San Jose Mission was completed on March 5, 1731. At that time numerous events were taking place around San Antonio. It was in 1731 that the Canary Island colonists arrived in Bexar and established the Villa de San Fernando. It was also in 1731 that the three Queretaran missions in East Texas, which had been suppressed in 1729, were reestablished along the San Antonio River in the vicinity of San Jose. Mission Nuestra Senora de la Purisima Concepcion de Acuna was located on the east side of the River between San Antonio and San Jose, on the side of the former Mission San Francisco Xavier. Also located on the east bank of the river over three miles south of San Jose was the Mission San Juan Capistrano. Some two miles farther south the Mission San Francisco de Espada was reestablished on the west bank of the River.

It should be noted here that with the arrival of the three Queretaran missions in the San Antonio vicinity San Jose was the only Zacatecan mission until the year 1773 when control of the remaining San Antonio missions was transferred to the college of Zacatecas.

Numerous troubles beset all of the San Antonio missions during their existence, including constant Apache and Comanche harassment and conflict with Spanish civil authorities and colonists; but none was so bad as the disastrous smallpox and measles epidemic which erupted in the area in 1739.

Perhaps as a result of the epidemic, San Jose was moved a third and last time to its present site on higher ground one-half mile distant from the previous one. This move ushered in the period of San Jose's greatest development and achievement. The development of the Mission's buildings can only be briefly documented by reference to the few contemporary reports known to us. In a report of 1744 Fr. Espinosa related that San Jose was one of the most successful of the Zacatecan missions. He also mentioned the existence of "a church with terraces," probably the first church erected at the present site.

Fr. Ciprian writing in 1749 described San Jose as a "veritable fortress" with a beautiful mission church capable of seating 200 persons. Adjoining the church was the friary or convent with its serrated cloister and flat roof with a crenellated parapet. Ciprian also recorded the existence of a two room, flat roofed stone granary and Indian houses of stone. The crenellated parapets were a common sight in the missions, and were built primarily for protection against the hostile Indians and other adversaries.

In 1758 Governor Jacinto Barrios paid a visit to San Jose and described the buildings in existence at that time. The Indians' houses, integral with the compound wall, were of stone and had flat roofs with crenellated parapets. Each house consisted of one room and a kitchen. Bathing pools and flowing water from the acequia were also noted. Barrios described the church as having a nave and a transept with a well-proportioned tower with a set of bells. Adjoining the church were the convent and the cloister, built of limestone, fairly large, and having two stories. The lower floor was divided into numerous rooms and offices, while the upper floor was one large room. Opposite the church were the quarters for the three soldiers customarily stationed at the missions. Other buildings mentioned were a carpenter shop, other workshops and a sugar cane mill. A cemetery enclosed by a rubble stone fence served double duty as a military plaza where the Indians practiced their military activities.

By 1768 construction was underway for the new church at San Jose. Fr. Solis recorded that the former church had been razed, and the building of a new stone church commenced. At the time of Fr. Solis' visit the foundations were completed; and on the feast day of St. Joseph, March 19, 1768, he blessed the foundation and the first stones. Governor Don Hugo Oconor also participated in the ceremony by laying one of the building stones.

Fr. Solis also described the mission compound, which at that date consisted of a large open plaza 611 feet square. This plaza was also used as a protective rampart. There were two gates apparently opposite each other and two towers on diagonal corners. The Indian apartments were erected along the walls and formed a part of them. These were of stone construction, and each was provided with a kitchen and a fireplace and was well furnished with raised beds and bison hide mattresses.

Workshops of various kinds were mentioned by Fr. Solis and included textile, tailor, carpenter and blacksmith shops. In addition there were lime and brick kilns and a stone granary with a vaulted roof.

The builder of the San Jose Church in 1768 was Fr. Pedro Ramirez de Arellano. Fr. Solis writing in 1768 stated, "This church, which is to be a stone structure with a vaulted ceiling is to be 50 varas (166.50 feet) in length and, including the transept, 30 varas (99.90 feet) in width." Fr. Morfi observed the construction of the church on his visit in January of 1778: ". . . when I saw it, a good part of the vaulted roof had not yet been finished. There are three arches in one beautiful nave, 50 varas long (166.50 feet) by 10 varas (33.30 feet) wide, with the corresponding transept. . . ."

Although Morfi relates that the nave vaults were incomplete at the time of his visit, he also reported that "there was very little to be done" to the church at that time for it to be complete. The south tower was completed by then, as was the "cupola," "overcrowded with unnecessary ornaments" or "useless moldings." In general, however, he considered the church "admirably proportioned; and because of "its size, good taste and beauty," he felt it "would grace a large city as a parish church."

In keeping with the usual convention in the erection of the mission churches, the chapel (sacristy) at San Jose was the first completed part of the church. Morfi described it as a "handsome and cheerful room, large and well decorated," "with good light and very gay." The room itself formed one "cell" or vault, and the door opened onto the "cloister or corridor of the convent." The chapel may have been built at about the same time as the church.

Fr. Morfi described the convent as a two-story structure extending eastward from the sacristy at the east end of the church, with a double gallery extending along the south side. This building provided quarters for the ministers and some guests and included "a large, well fitted out, comfortable refectory" and other offices for the missionaries. In addition, the convent contained a kitchen and pantry, an armory wherein were kept the arms for the Indians, and a room set aside for the decorations and costumes "with which the Indians bedeck themselves for their dances."

Morfi thought highly of the stone used in the construction of San Jose, which he described as a "sandy limestone that is light and porous when freshly quarried but in a few days hardens and becomes one with the mortar for which reason it is as useful for building as 'tezontle'." This stone, quarried near the Mission Concepcion, was the favorite building material for all of the San Antonio missions.

Even while the new church was being erected in the 1770s, San Jose, along with the other San Antonio Missions, was entering its declining years. Apache raids continued to harass the Missions, taking their toll in both inhabitants and livestock; and the contagious epidemics also continued to reduce the Indian population.

Another of the principal reasons for the Missions' decline was a decree issued by Theodoro de Croix following his visit to Texas in 1777. This decree literally stripped the missions of their wealth by declaring that all wild or unbranded cattle, of which the missions had thousands, were the property of the state and could not be slaughtered except by payment to the government. Although the missions were given a four month period in which to brand their herds, the task was impossible due to the reduced population and the lack of horses, almost all of which had been stolen by the wild Indians.

The herds were further reduced by raiding Indians who slaughtered the cattle wantonly and by the soldiers of the Presidio of San Antonio who killed to supply the needs of the garrison. In addition there were those among the Spanish colonists who were known to slaughter a hundred head or more in a week.

By 1780 the College of Zacatecas was fully aware of the circumstances of the San Antonio Missions under its jurisdiction and foresaw the coming future events. In 1780 the College petitioned Commandant General Theodoro de Croix for relief from the temporal affairs of the Missions. It was suggested that a layman be appointed the responsibility of the temporal administration of the Indians, preceded by a property distribution among them; and that the missionary would be responsible only for the church, the friary or convent and their furnishings.

The petition of 1780 was not acted on, and it was not until 1794 that a decree of partial secularization was issued. In that year San Jose and the three other San Antonio missions distributed some of their fields and other property among the resident Christian Indians and appointed a "justice" to assume the duties of a temporal administrator. The missionaries continued in charge of those Indians still under instruction but exercised their duties under the jurisdiction of the Bishop in the manner of Parish priests.

Secularization proceedings were carried out by Governor Munoz on July 16, 1794, at which time he announced to the 78 Christian Indians of San Jose that the common property was to be subdivided with each family receiving a part of it; they would then be required to provide for their own needs. A common farm was to be established to defray the expenses of the community. Jose Herrera, a Spaniard, was appointed as the "justice" to live among them as their advisor and protector in temporal affairs. The church and friary, along with fifteen acres of land, were allocated to the missionary to remain in his care and under his direction.

Following secularization, the Mission San Jose continued its affairs in good order. The Mission was then called San Jose pueblo, and slowly Spaniards began to settle around it. By 1804 the population of San Jose was composed of 57 Indians and 16 Spaniards. Five years later San Jose Church and those of the other three missions were administered by only two Franciscan missionaries, and by 1820 only one.

Complete secularization, amounting to suppression, was finalized on February 24, 1824. Iturbide, emperor of Mexico, upon his ascension to office had reinstituted the laws of Spain under Cortes; one of the acts was a secularization decree issued in 1813 ordering immediate distribution of mission lands to private citizens reserving a portion for the Indian inhabitants. Fr. Diaz in 1823, the only priest in San Antonio, delayed the proceedings for a time; but finally in February of 1824 he was compelled to sign over the inventories of all the old San Antonio missions. The church buildings were given over to the San Fernando parish to be administered by the pastor of the church.

Following this event the buildings at San Jose became increasingly neglected and abandoned. A few families occupied the old quarters, but the only other use of the buildings until 1842 was for quartering soldiers in the old Indian houses.

On January 13, 1841, the Texas Congress, as a result of a petition by Fr. Odin and Fr. Timon, passed an act "Confirming the Use, Occupation, and Enjoyment of the Churches, Church lots, and Mission Churches to the Roman Catholic Congregations living in or near the vicinity of the same." The mission churches along with out-buildings and lots were declared the property of "the present chief pastor of the Roman Catholic Church in the Republic of Texas, and his successors in office; in trust forever, for the use and benefit of the congregations residing near the same. . . ."

San Jose Church was probably used from time to time during the 1840s for religious purposes. George Kendall in his "Narrative of the Texas Santa Fe Expedition," written for the New Orleans Picayune, reported that by 1841 the church had been repaired and divine service was performed in it.



Kendall also reported that even though the Texan troops "were long quartered" at San Jose they had not injured the elaborate stone carvings on the front facade of the church. Two years later, however, William Bollaert recorded that the "images of the saints and other ornamental parts had been sadly mutilated by the soldiery during the wars." Bollaert found the church "still in good preservation" although full of bats' nests.

John R. Bartlett, one of the United States commissioners of the boundary survey, viewed San Jose in 1850 and concurred with Bollaert:

The action of the weather has done much to destroy the figures, and the work of ruin has been assisted by the numerous military companies near here who, finding in the hands and features of the statues convenient marks for rifle and pistol shots, did not fail to improve the opportunity for showing their skill at arms.

In 1859 San Jose was used as a Benedictine monastery and seminary. Bishop Odin had induced the Abbot of St. Vincent's Abbey at Latrobe, Pennsylvania, to supply a prior, two priests and two brothers for this purpose. During their stay the Benedictines made numerous improvements to the San Jose buildings,

The Benedictines were recalled in 1868, and San Jose was abandoned for four years. On December 10, 1868, the north wall of the church collapsed during a storm; on the night of December 25, 1874, the dome and most of the roof fell in.

In 1872 San Jose was occupied by the Holy Cross Fathers from Notre Dame, Indiana. Regular services were then conducted, although not in the church due to its ruinous state but rather in the chapel adjoining the church on the south side. After the Holy Cross Fathers left in 1888 services were still occasionally held. In 1890, William Corner reported that the Mexican families were living in the old Mission quarters.

On April 22, 1923, the Redemptorist Fathers of San Antonio were placed in charge of the old missions; they conducted divine services in the San Jose chapel until the return of the Franciscans in 1931.

Restoration on the old buildings began in 1918 when the church was cleared of debris and part of the north wall was rebuilt. This work was made possible by Mrs. Henry Drought as a memorial to her husband. Cracks were patched and the spiral staircase which had fallen in 1903 was replaced. The chapel was also renovated and furnished, and the lower arches of the convent were filled in.

Sometime between the evening of March 8 and the morning of March 9, 1928, the entire south facade of the southwest corner tower fell. The front facade was largely undisturbed with the exception of the belfry itself, which was considerably damaged. Immediately after the event, Archbishop Drossaerts announced that the tower would be restored to its original appearance.

Restoration work was continued from 1934 to 1936. The church was in use and rededicated April 18, 1937. Further work was carried out in 1947-1952 when the facade statues were repaired and the structure as a whole was strengthened.

During the 1930s the San Antonio Conservation Society purchased the ruins of the old Granary, which it then proceeded to restore. In 1941 the Society deeded the Granary property to Bexar County, and the county in turn transferred the Granary and the remaining property that it owned to the State of Texas.

The Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio, which owned the church and convent and one half interest in the main plaza, followed with a cooperative agreement with the State of Texas to have the San Jose Mission established as a State Historic Site. In that same year San Jose was declared a National Historic Site. It is currently administered by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in cooperation with the Archdiocese of San Antonio, the National Park Service, the San Antonio Conservation Society, and the County of Bexar.

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Director, Bexas County  
Architecture Survey  
1969

#### PROJECT INFORMATION

The San Antonio project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in the summer of 1969, and was made possible with funds from HABS and two sponsors, the Bexar County Historical Survey Committee and the San Antonio Conservation Society. Under the direction of James Massey, chief of HABS, the project was carried out by Wesley I. Shank (Iowa State University), project supervisor, and by student assistant architects, Charles W. Barrow (University of Texas); Les Beilinson (University of Miami); William H. Edwards (University of Illinois); and Larry D. Hermesen (Iowa State University) at the HABS field office in the former Ursuline Convent Buildings, San Antonio. John C. Garner, Jr., director of Bexar County Architecture Survey, did the outside work on the written documentaries. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data in 1983, for preparation of transmittal to the Library of Congress. Dewey G. Mears of Austin, Texas took the documentary photographs of the San Antonio structures.

Addendum to  
Mision San Jose Y San Miguel de Aguayo  
(San Jose Mission)  
Mission Road  
San Antonio  
Bexar County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-333

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